

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 02191 312101Z

73

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0538

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2191

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, ASEC, AR

SUBJECT: LABOR AND THE GOA

REF: A. BA 2110 AND B. BA 2030

1. WITH THE OBVIOUS BLESSINGS OF LABOR MINISTER OTERO, POLICE ON MARCH 26 ARRESTED ALL PLANT UNION DELEGATES AND EJECTED SIT-DOWN STRIKERS FROM THE VILLA CONSTITUCION METAL WORKING AND STEEL PLANTS. THE POLICE ACTION CAME AFTER THE WORKERS HAD EXPRESSED THEIR DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE THEIR STRIKE IN SUPPORT OF OFFICIALS OF THE "CLASSIST", ANTI-LORENZO MIGUEL REBEL UOM UNION WHO WERE ARRESTED ON MARCH 20, THE SAME DAY INTERIOR MINISTER ROCAMORA ANNOUNCED THERE WAS A "MASSIVE PLOT TO PARALYZE INDUSTRY." ALSO PRIOR TO THE POLICE ACTION, THE MINISTER OF LABOR HAD INTERVENED THE REBEL UNION. HE, OTERO, HAS NOW APPOINTED AS INTERVENTOR THE SAME INDIVIDUAL WHO PRESIDED OVER THE MINISTRY OF LABOR'S LIQUIDATION OF RAIMUNDO ONGARO-LED GRAPHICS ARTS UNION IN LATER 1974.

2. THE "CLASSISTS" HAVE DENOUNCED THE POLICE ACTION AND HAVE ALSO CHARGED THE CENTRAL UOM WITH NOT SUPPORTING THEIR STRIKE. LORENZO MIGUEL HAS SAID SIMPLY THAT HE WILL STUDY THE MATTER. MEANWHILE, THE REBEL UNION REMAINS INTERVENED AND ITS LEADERS
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PAGE 02 BUENOS 02191 312101Z

UNDER ARREST. ROCAMORA'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF A "MASSIVE

PLOT" ON MARCH 20, THEN, HAS RESULTED IN THE SEIZURE OF A UNION WHICH OPPOSED LORENZO MIGUEL. THIS LENDS SUBSTNACE TO THE THESIS THAT ROCAMORA'S OBJECTIVE WAS TO INGRATIATE HIMSELF WITH LORENZO MIGUEL AND THE OTHER ORTHODOX LABOR LEADERS.

3. IN ANOTHER DEVELOPMENT OVER THE EASTER WEEKEND, VICTORIO CALABRO, GOVERNOR OF BA PROVINCE AND AN OFFICER OF THE UOM, MET WITH LORENZO MIGUEL IN MAR DEL PLATA AND ANNOUNCED HIS FULL SUPPORT FOR THE STATEMENT OF THE 62 ORGANIZATIONS ISSUED MARCH 24 (SEE REF A). MIGUEL AND CGT LEADER CASILDO HERRERAS WILL THUS GO INTO THEIR MEETING SOMETIME THIS COMING WEEK (POSSIBLY APRIL 1) WITH THEIR HANDS STRENGTHENED.

4. THE PRESS MEANWHILE IS SPECULATING THAT ROCAMORA'S MARCH 26 ANNOUNCEMENT THAT MRS. PERON WILL RESUME DIALOGUE WITH THE COUNTRY'S VARIOUS SECTORS AND POLITICAL PARTIES (SEE REF B), IS, IN ADDITION TO A VICTORY FOR THE MODERATES, A PLOY TO PLACE LABOR-GOVERNMENT DIFFERENCES IN A CONTEXT MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT, MAKING LABOR'S DEMANDED MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT A NORMAL EVENT AS ONE OF MANY PLANNED UNDER RENEWED DIALOGUE. FURTHER, ANY MAJOR GOA CONCESSIONS IN ECONOMIC/POLITICAL FIELD COULD ALSO BE PASSED OFF MORE EASILY AS THE RESULT OF THE DIALOGUE RATHER THAN AS CAPITULATION TO LABOR.

5. COMMENT: THE GOVERNMENT MAY WELL SATISFY CERTAIN OF LABOR'S DEMANDS IN THE DAYS AND WEEKS AHEAD. THIS WILL NOT NECESSARILY PLACE LABOR IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT, HOWEVER. IF IT EVENTUALLY WINS OUT, FOR EXAMPLE, IN ITS REPORTED DEMANDS FOR CABINET CHANGES, IT WILL HAVE DONE SO LARGELY BECAUSE IT IS BACKED IN THOSE DEMANDS BY THE OTHER KEY SECTORS, INCLUDING THE ARMED FORCES. IT WOULD NOT HAVE THE STRENGTH TO BULL THROUGH DEMANDS ON WHICH SUCH UNITY DID NOT EXIST. AND EVEN WITH RESPECT TO THE CABINET CHANGES, THERE MAY STILL BE SOME TEMPORIZING.
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